

**COLORADO RIVER RECOVERY PROGRAM
FY 2002 ANNUAL REPORT**

PROJECT NUMBER: PIP 12I

I. Project Title: Ruedi Reservoir Releases Public Involvement Plan

II. Principal Investigator(s):

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III. Project Summary: Since 1990, Reclamation has released water from Ruedi Reservoir to benefit endangered fish species in the 15 Mile Reach of the Colorado River. Local businesses and residents of Basalt, Colorado, have expressed concern that when these releases to the local Fryingpan River exceed 250 cfs, the Fryingpan's gold-medal fishery is adversely impacted. Basalt's economy is based on the fishery reputation and resulting tourism. However, in managing Ruedi to meet multi-purpose needs of the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project of which Ruedi is a part, Reclamation's Eastern Colorado Area Office (who owns and operates Ruedi) must periodically release flows greater than 250 cfs. To promote understanding of the Colorado River Recovery Program, the Fry-Ark Project, and to help address stakeholder concerns, the ECAO maintains an open and continuous dialogue with local businesses and residents.

IV. Study Schedule: 1995-present

V. Relationship to RIPRAP: Action Plan item 1.A.4c(1)(b)

VI. Accomplishment of FY 2002 Tasks and Deliverables, Discussion of Initial Findings and Shortcomings:

Tasks: The ECAO disseminated timely information on related activities, including meetings, through news releases, frequent e-mail notifications, customer request responses, and public notifications. We held two public meetings: one in April to present the draft Environmental Assessment on the Year 2012 Agreement; and one in May to address releases under the Recovery Program and general Ruedi Reservoir operations. Upon request, we also provided a public presentation to the Basalt Board of Trustees in September to explain Ruedi operations and releases.

Our main goal in FY02 was to address concerns voiced by the public at last year's public meeting and in year-round correspondences. We did our best to respond to those concerns. In FY 2002 we:

- 1) Conducted a year-in-review presentation: what happened at Ruedi last year (FY01) compared to what is happening this year (FY02). This was particularly important this year because of the drought conditions, which altered Ruedi demands and operations, somewhat.
- 2) Increased e-mail notifications to better communication frequent operational changes due to drought. Continued to expand e-mail notification list. E-mail notifications sent to public list for all Ruedi releases and operational changes.
- 3) Once again had staff representatives present at public meetings for all applicable areas of public concern including fish biology, operations planning and contracting.
- 4) Once again held the public meetings as locally as possible (this year in Carbondale and Basalt) instead of asking the public to drive 45 minutes to Glenwood Springs. Once again, we had a very large crowd for the Year 2012 meeting (about 40).

Our second goal for this year was to continue our public involvement on the Year 2012 Agreement to provide 10,825 acre-feet a year of water to benefit the endangered fish. The Agreement is an action in the RIP and the PBO. We have continued our work with various groups to review hydrologic modeling and public involvement. This year that included opening contract negotiation meetings to the public and holding a public comment period for those meetings.

Discussion of Initial Findings and Shortcomings:

This year we again combined the annual Coordinated Reservoirs Operations meeting and the annual Ruedi Reservoir Operations meeting. This was especially easy because we did not implement the Coordinated Reservoir Operations program this year. Hosting one meeting rather than two has generated a very positive response from the public and our partners. This way, all questions are answered at the same meeting.

Some of the requests made at past years' public meetings have still not been implemented. We have not:

- 1) Distributed an evaluation at the end of the season (October) to "randomly selected" stakeholders to assess "What Would You Like to see Covered at the Spring Meeting?"
- 2) Distributed evaluation forms post-meeting for comments from "randomly selected" stakeholders for a more thorough assessment of our performance.
- 3) Set-up a 1-800 number for Ruedi updates so information is more readily accessible. This could be handier for the public than e-mail updates. It depends on how many more people have phones than e-mail.

VII. Recommendations: We received many written comments from the public this year through two public processes: the 2012 Agreement EIS public involvement process; and the public comment period for the 2012 Agreement contract negotiation meetings. However, we have not finished processing all these comments to see if they include recommendations for our public involvement program. When comments are processed, new recommendations will be incorporated. We will also continue to apply lessons learned from past years to our ongoing program.

VIII. Project Status: On track and ongoing.

IX. FY 2002 Budget Status

- A. Funds Provided: 0
- B. Funds Expended: n/a
- C. Difference: n/a
- D. Percent of the FY 2002 work completed, and projected costs to complete: n/a
- E. Recovery Program funds spent for publication charges: 0

X. Status of Data Submission (Where applicable): n/a

XI. Signed:

Kara Lamb

12/3/02

Kara Lamb
Public Involvement Specialist

Date